

FRENCH INDO-CHINA

there existed only one effective counterpoise to his absolute and sacro[^] sanct authority—the possibility of losing Heaven's mandate. In his ptermteic role, as head of the hundred families which make up Annan* the Emperor is responsible for the welfare of his subjects. Only if he succeeds in making his people happy does he justify the supreme conferred upon him by Heaven. By further delegation of this power and to the same end, the mandarins and heads of families part in varying degrees, of this same authority. As part of the principle of balancing privilege by duty, which permeates the whole system, the Emperor must serve as an example of virtue to his subjects: he is the first scholar of his kingdom, the Complete Observer of Confucius's precepts. Thus in cases of public misfortune, the Emperor up his spiritual accounts, humbly confesses his unworthiness at Heaven's altar, and asks for a renewal of the celestial mandate. If the Emperor is persistently evil or unjust, he is regarded as having forfeited his right to rule. Then, and only then, have the people a right to revolt, and they are even authorized to do so by divine law. This of the imperial power is, however, purely theoretical, for in practice the Emperor can dispose of his kingdom and people virtually as he pleases. The mandarins, the imperial aides, are raised from the people to which they can be returned if they prove unworthy of their lifecentral power. By an organization that gives a religious tfaft to all existing institutions, the Annamites have been a united and stereotyped people. Up to very modern

any other form of government would have seemed to them
ao fimfy did they believe in the Confucianist adage that it
m dignity for mea to be without a leader.
Tke wig¹ recruited from the masses but, when con-
m a group, formed a distinct body of officials.
The poorest boy tt* for a career provided that he could master the know-
for the fnaadaESial examinations. Although education in
wm qor cmapTilsory, the civil service system itself
m» th* of drattp^lfe tctor faired by a rich family would
pq^ for" a nominal fee, and a promising ft iMEcM sponsor. To be sure, this saddled the M*a&4c&te jfcgt he j^ to profit by ^y oppor.
j eweer ft defay'),! early expenses. The subjects on
we^ p^ ptt?wy> philosophical, and moral,